

- 1 Plants perennial, with long, scaly rhizomes, forming large clumps or colonies; inflorescences 7–30 cm long, dense, but usually interrupted and noticeably branched panicles 1 *Phalaris arundinacea*
- + Plants annual, without rhizomes, forming tufts; inflorescences appearing as dense, ovoid to nearly cylindrical, uninterrupted spikes, the branches very short and inconspicuous (2)
- 2 (1) Sterile lemmas 0.6–1.2 mm long, swollen and somewhat fleshy 2 *Phalaris brachystachys*
- + Sterile lemmas 1.5–4.5 mm long, membranous to papery, not swollen or fleshy (3)
- 3 (2) Sterile lemmas 2.5–4.5 mm long, lanceolate; glumes with the midnerve (keel) relatively broadly winged toward the tip, the wing up to 1 mm wide at its broadest point 3 *Phalaris canariensis*
- + Sterile lemmas 1.5–2.5 mm long, linear; glumes with the midnerve (keel) narrowly winged toward the tip, the wing up to 0.5 mm wide at its broadest point 4 *Phalaris caroliniana*